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THE ROLE OF POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, THE CASE STUDY OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

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1. Introduction

Tanzania belongs to the 33 African countries that are currently undertaking structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), otherwise known as the economic recovery programmes (ERPs). The ongoing economic crisis that began at the turn of the decade of the 1970s and whose origin can be traced from internal as well as external factors, has forced many African countries to enter into agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the only way to be credit-worthy and resume getting credit from multilateral organizations and the developed countries of the North.

The resumption of borrowing mainly under concessionaire terms for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) under agreements signed between these countries and the IMF is normally accompanied by conditionalities. These are normally informed by Western liberal economic thinking and their main objective is to restore balances in the internal and external sectors in order to enhance exports.

The undue emphasis put on balancing books internally and externally through such policies as reduction in social investments and reduction of labour force, devaluation of local currencies, higher interest rates and credit ceilings, etc., have completely bypassed the human factor and the development of human resources as the most important aspect of economic recovery. The working people of Africa have not only been excluded in the process of formulating ERPs, the implementation of ERPs have tended to demobilize them.

The formulation and signing of these agreements have been shrouded in secrecy and the African governments have normally avoided any process of dialogue with the social groups that are supposed to implement the recovery programme. The argument would seem to be that as long as the prices are correct (Harvey, 1988) then everything else follows. In practice as we shall point out in great detail in part two of this paper, "the getting prices correct" ideology, unless complemented by other human resources related socio-economic policies and fundamental economic restructuring (beyond the mere balancing of external and internal accounts for more exports), cannot bring about sustainable economic recovery. The centrality of people's participation in ERPs has been underscored by the ECA's "African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation" (AAF-SAP) thus:

> "The key role of the government, in this respect, will embrace the creation of an enabling environment and institution building for effective implementation and vigorous support for grass-roots initiatives. On the other hand, democratization and popular participation will encourage the people to increase their development effort and to accept whatever sacrifices that may be implied by the programmes, thereby consolidating and deepening the process for national self-reliance" (ECA, 1989, pp. 49-50).

It will be the objective of this paper to make a critical analysis of the existing potential structures of people's participation in Tanzania and assess the extent to which they hinder or encourage people's participation. In doing so, I shall in the second part make a brief historical survey of development strategies (particularly agricultural and rural) and how they discouraged or encouraged the participatory process. In the third part, I shall undertake a critical review of the potentiality of the existing institution of peoples

participation and in the fourth and concluding part, strategies for increased people's participation in the development process will be proposed.

2. Development strategies and popular participation, a brief historical survey

In order to put the current state of affairs with respect to popular participation in the correct perspective, a brief historical survey of development strategies since Tanzania got independence (1960) is in order. With the possible exception of the immediate post-Arusha Declaration period (1967-69), Tanzania has been closely associated with the World Bank in the sphere of economic policy formulation. This point is worth emphasizing right from the beginning stressing in order to understand the checkered history of people's participation in Tanzania.

When Tanzania achieved its political independence, it inherited a World Bank-formulated economic development programme entitled "The Economic Development of Tanganyika" (IBRD, 1960). In the agricultural sector, the Bank proposed a dual agricultural transformation policy - the improvement and transformation approaches to agricultural development. The first put more emphasis in the colonial progressive farmer policy whereas the latter encouraged village settlements on the basis of carefully selected peasant population and heavy components of external aid and management. In both cases the beneficiaries were a small section of the peasantry. The rest were supposed to benefit from the trickle-down effect of the development process which was in turn supposed to come from the concentration of financial and managerial resources on a few farmers.

The two agricultural transformation strategies were informed by diffusionist theory based modernization paradigm of the 1950s and 1960s. In this context, the majority of the rural population were supposed to be passive participants in the development process. The extensive use of community development personnel had the objective of preparing the peasants to absorb and use effectively the trickling down effect of the development process and not to enable the peasants to participate in the process. The results of this agrarian transformation policy both from the point of view of increasing production and bringing about a broad-based development process were disappointing. The dual strategy of agricultural transformation was replaced by the Arusha Declaration based policies that were supposed to be voluntary, participatory and egalitarian.

2.1 The Arusha Declaration: towards a voluntary, participatory and egalitarian model of development

> "It is important .... to realize that the policy of Ujamaa Vijijini is not intended to be merely a revival of the old settlement schemes under another name. The Ujamaa village is a new conception, based on the post-Arusha Declaration understanding that what we need to develop is people not things, and that peoples can only develop themselves" (Nyerere, 1974, p.36).

The Ujamaa Vijijini policy - the agricultural and rural transformation component of the Arusha Declaration - aimed at encouraging the peasants to form communal villages on a voluntary and participatory basis. The fate of this strategy of rural and agricultural transformation is now very well known. For

a number of reasons, including the absence of effective grass-root (democratic) structures and the imperatives of a primary commodity export based economy (Green, 1980; Coulson, 1979), this policy was replaced by a much more government and donor interventionist agrarian and rural transformation strategies of the 1970s.

2.2 Villagization, integrated rural development programmes -the development process

If the immediate years after the proclamation of Arusha Declaration gave some hope for a people-centred and participatory development strategy, the 1970s witnessed the statization of the development process to the extent unheard of in the post-independence history of Tanzania. This new development can be explained by two related processes. The first had to do with the long process of consolidating the Party vis-à-vis other contending socio-political forces like the trade unions, co-operative unions and local government organizations. This was motivated by the need to both control the financial resources for political legitimization purposes as well as by the genuine need to improve the efficiency of the people-oriented organization, although this objective was often based on an incorrect understanding of the causes of the malfunctioning of these organizations as I shall point out soon.

In order to understand the current situation of the people-oriented institutions, it is important to situate this analysis within a class perspective. The struggle between the ruling party then TANU and "grass-root" organizations while justified by the need to transform them into worker and peasant organizations, was in actual fact a struggle between fractions of the petty-bourgeoisie who were situated either in the trade unions, co-operative unions and the Party and/or government (Shivji, 1975). It should, therefore, be emphasized that the final incorporation of all the potential grass-root organizations under the control of the Party did not remove the class of these organizations even though they all paid allegiance to the ruling Party.

This class factor is very often over-looked by policy makers when formulating corrective policy measures whose objective is to improve the efficiency of these organizations and make them work for their respective members.

Having made this small digression, let us go back to the process of bringing all potential institutions of popular participation within the control of the ruling Party. The first to come under Party leadership was the then called Tanganyika Federation of Labour (TFL) which was replaced by NUTA in 1964. The adoption of the one-party system in 1965 and the subsequent establishment of the Party as the supreme organ of the State by the 1975 Interim Constitution brought all the grass-root organizations (officially known as the mass organization of the Party) under the direct control of the Party (Mavenvik, 1988).

The second aspect that explains the statization of the development process in the 1970s is the development strategies adopted by both the Government of Tanzania and the donor community, particularly the World Bank. The adoption by the second Five-year Plan (1969-1974) of a frontal approach to rural co-operation

that in actual fact replaced the voluntary and participatory policies of the Ujamaa Vijijini (socialism and rural development) translated into a massive and at times forced population concentration campaign of 1971-1974. This perfected the carrot and stick approach to economic development. By moving into the so-called development villages - villages in which the peasants were expected to grow more cash crops, on an individual basis - the State promised to provide schools, hospitals, piped water, etc.

The concentration of rural populations in planned and apparently easily managed institutions drew the attention and interest of donor agencies and particularly the World Bank which was then beginning to experiment with a new approach to rural and agricultural transformation after the disappointing results of the "trickle down" (modernization) policies of the 1960s. Absolute poverty and unemployment continued to increase even in situations like India where the Green Revolution had led to impressive growth rates in productivity. The World Bank adopted the so-called Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS). This strategy is multisectoral and includes poverty alleviating policies like the provision of school, hospitals and employment-generating activities.

While the World Bank was not itself directly involved in the major reorganization of the Local Government Administration and Co-operative Union of the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, it did give tacit approval because of the expected efficiency of the new administrative structures particularly in relationship to managing integrated projects. Partly in order to curb inefficiency and corruption and also to have a firm control of the activities of the two organizations, the State made a number of legal and administrative changes in the activities of these institutions that finally culminated in the dissolution of the Local Government Administration structure in 1972 and that of co-operative unions, by 1976.

At every level in this process, the objective was not to give more power to the ordinary members of these organizations in order to enable them to exercise greater control over the leadership but to increase the control and regulatory mechanisms of the State. After a thorough investigation by the presidential inquiry into the co-operative movement of 1966 which uncovered high overhead costs, embezzlement, dubious investment of union surpluses and favouritism (Kleemeier, 1982), one of the solutions that became obvious with the adoption of the 1968 co-operative reforms was more control of the co-operatives by the Registrar of Co-operatives. This has been commented upon by Holmquist (1980, p.162) thus:

> "The overall effect of an expanded State presence was generally more State control than peasant control, and many co-operatives became rather inflexible, bureaucratic organizations and virtually produce collection agencies for the State".

The reforms of the local government system also followed the same bureaucratic procedure. The Government of Tanzania commissioned a committee that was headed by Cranford Pratt to look into the possibilities of decentralizing the government structure. Cranford did submit a report that "... recommended greater devolution of authority to autonomous, elected regional bodies ..." but this was apparently disregarded (Kleemeier, op.cit., p.26) and the Government

hired and implemented the recommendations of McKinsey Company. Instead of suggesting a decentralization policy that devolved the decision-making process to grass-root organizations, the company proposed one that simply deconcentrated power and authority to regional and district authorities. This process was completed by the adoption of the Villages and Ujamaa Village Act of 1985 that reconstituted the village governments into political and economic entities that had stronger vertical links to district and regional party and government structures than horizontal links with grass-root organizations. This Act, by transforming all village governments into buying centres and by removing the regional co-operative unions, exposed the villages and peasants to the direct control of marketing parastatals. This grand attempt to have all the conditions of peasant production come under the direct control of the central government has been very well described by Bryceson (1980, p.11) thus:

> "... decentralization had a very marked element of recentralization because it, in effect, replaced the local government system with an elaborate system of vertical information and planning flows centralized at the highest echelons of the government and Party. The 1975 Village Act reserved to plug the village directly into this elaborate administrative framework extending the vertical flows down and up the village level".

It was not long before the full impact of the attempt to police the entire rural economy was felt. Marketing margins increased significantly and these were reflected in the ever-decreasing percentage of the world market prices of the export crops that went to the peasants. By 1979 the peasants were receiving between 30 to 50 per cent of world market export crop prices (ILO, 1979). The balance was mainly spent on financing the overblown, inefficient and increasingly corrupt bureaucracy in the crop authorities. Increasing overhead cost necessitated the crop authorities to depend on bank over-drafts to run their operations and indeed, by 1979, they were spending about 80 per cent of the nation's credit portfolio.

The dissolution and/or total control of the potential organs of popular participation was the most tragic development of 1970s. The decision to legislate back the co-operative unions and the local government authorities in 1982 was not, in my opinion, accompanied by a process of democratizing the reinstated institutions. The same class forces and class alliances that dominated the old institutions would seem to be still active. The control of the ruling Party over these institutions is not based on any clearly formulated policy that would emphasize the need for the majority of the members of these institutions - essentially small-holder men and women peasants to exercise control over these institutions. In most cases leadership is dominated by influential petty-bourgeoisie, themselves carefully screened by the Party but with more alliance and allegiance to petty the bourgeoisie in the party and Government on the one hand and influential and powerful rural elites essentially big farmers on the other.

These clearly internal factors have been made stronger by a development strategy that is basically informed by technical considerations that has dominated the development scene of the third United Nations Decade - the ERPs. Preoccupied by the demanding tasks of balancing the external and internal accounts through budgetary cuts, imposing credit ceilings on commercial banks,

constant devaluations, etc., on the one hand, and by trying to justify the relevance of these policies on the other, both the Government and the Party bureaucracy have tended to pay little attention to the issues of participation and democracy. The complete neglect of popular participation concerns of the development process based on a clear understanding of which target groups (to use a less ideological phrase) should be at the centre of the participation and control process of institutions of popular participation does explain, to a great extent, the current enormous problems of accountability and efficiency affecting most of the newly reintroduced co-operative unions and local government authorities (both urban and rural).

The current awakening to this problem by the ruling Party (CCM) by calling the chief executives of the non profit making co-operatives to put their houses in order or else close shop, without a serious rethinking on which social groups (target groups) should control these institutions and the establishment of a favourable national institutional framework for this is, in my opinion, an exercise in futility. The following section will take up this matter.

3. A review of the potentialities of the existing institutions of popular participation

From the point of view of potential institutions of popular participation, Tanzania has one of the most well-developed structures in Africa. Depending on specific time frameworks, the structure of potential participation have had two or one effective channels of communication.

In the 1960s, there were basically two functional channels of communication for potential popular participation: the Party channel of communication from the 10-house units under the cell leader to the village, district, regional and national Party structures. This Party channel of communication was initially paralleled by a fairly effective local government structure (1961-1968) before it finally came to dominate it particularly in the 1970s. With the abolition of the local government system in 1972, the village assembly (the highest representative body of the village community) and the village council (its executive arm) came under the leadership of the village chairman and Party secretary and functionally was subordinated to the district development council and the regional development committee - institutions that increasingly lost any representative character as they became dominated by bureaucrats and not elected representatives, as was the case with the district councils of the pre-decentralization years. In fact, as it was at the level of the villages, the district Party chairman and secretary was the chairman and secretary of the district development committee respectively.

Indeed, it can be rightly argued that during the 1970s, the channels of "popular" participation were reduced to one. The Party channels became increasingly intertwined with those of the government and local government channels disappeared.

The post-1982 channels did bring back the two channels of "popular" participation by restoring the "popularly" elected district councils and the abolition of district development councils. These were replaced by district development committees that are limited "... in assisting the new district

council and giving advice generally on development programmes" (Mawhood, 1981, p.99). The regional development committees were given a co-ordinating role of the economic development activities of the regions. Let it be noted here that, although the 1982 reform of the local government system separated the Party and local government functions somewhat, the Party remains supreme. Elected local government personnel, for example, have still to be members of the Party and have to be screened before they can be voted for.

As it was noted in relationship to the co operative unions, the supremacy of the Party has quite often been used to consolidate class alliances that normally work against the interests of the majority of the members of the district councils. In the rural context of Tanzania, these are essentially small-holder farmers.

There are two more channels of potential of popular participation that one would like to pursue further if time allowed. One of them constitutes the mass organizations of the ruling Party. These are subordinate structures of the Party and represent various social groups - the women's organization (Umoja Wa Wanawake) - the CCM youth organizations and Washirika (the apex organization of the co-operative union). The latter is supposed to defend the interest of the majority of the rural producers and involve them effectively in policy formulation and implementation. We have commented very briefly on the shortcomings of the co-operatives as representatives of the majority of the rural producers in part two of this report and we would not like to repeat ourselves here. Suffice it to reiterate the point that they tend to forge class alliances that marginalize the small-holder farmers and this fact, more than any other (technico managerial reasons), is at the centre of the current crisis of co-operatives which is manifested in thefts, in increasing socio-overhead costs, etc.

The other potential channels of popular participation are constituted by the private non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - both local and international. Two pertinent observations are in order here: one is that most indigenous private NGOs are very young and weak organizationally. Secondly and perhaps most important, most of them tend to be professional and exclude the majority of Tanzania's population who continue to be dominated by indigenous official NGOs already analyzed at length above. It is worth noting that the Party and Government are quite willing to allow for considerable amount of independence to elite NGOs but are quite reluctant to do the same to potential grass-root organizations like the co operative unions, the trade union (JUWATA). It is for example a matter of grave concern that the General Secretary of the Tanzania's Trade Union is at the same time a Minister of Labour! It is also quite instructive on the other hand that the Tanganyika Farmers Association (TFA) - an association of wealthy farmers - is not subordinated to Party structures as the official NGO "of" the "peasants" is.

1. Strategies for increased popular participation in the development process, concluding remarks

The preceding three sections have attempted to provide the state of the art of popular participation in Tanzania. It has been generally observed that the majority of Tanzanians are excluded from effective participation even though

Tanzania is seen to have a fairly well-developed infrastructure for popular participation. On the basis of the following important three observations, three strategies for increased effective popular participation will be suggested:

1. The concept of Party supremacy has wrongly been interpreted to mean a total control of the potential organs of the popular participation. Often the imperative for Party supremacy has been wrongly used to forge anti-people (i.e., anti-small-holder farmers and ordinary workers) class alliances for narrow social group (class) interests:

(a) Even women maintaining one-party democracy and the related aspect of party supremacy as would seem to be the case for Tanzania, it is possible to envisage a situation where the Party could allow for relative autonomy for grass-root based institutions of popular participation. This relative autonomy could include the abolition of the screening process for elections and could even allow for non Party members to contend for leadership. This sounds unorthodox from the point of view of socialist construction but, in the light of the current struggles for democracy in Africa and other parts of the world, this could be the most effective way of consolidating socialist parties and socialism;

(b) This does not mean that CCM should abrogate its responsibility of defending the interests of the workers and peasants. In my opinion, the autonomy of the organs of popular participation must be placed within a specific political context. Autonomous institutions of popular participation if not backed by democratic political parties, can hardly survive.

2. This observation brings me to the question of the role of indigenous NGOs in consolidating popular participation. The words NGO have now become the buzz words for development assistance. Both multilateral and country specific donor agencies are finding the idea of channelling development assistance through NGOs attractive. The argument is that African Governments are corrupt and inefficient and therefore for development assistance to reach the target groups (superficially defined as the poorest of the poor), it should bypass formal government structures:

In the context of Tanzania and probably most African countries, the insistence of channelling development aid through NGOs is problematic in two ways. One, indigenous private NGOs are few and inexperienced, unless they operate under the tutelage of the more developed North NGOs. Secondly, even if they were developed and effective, NGOs do not operate in a political vacuum nor are they value free in their operations. The mere existence of an NGO does not mean that it represents the interests of the "poorest of the poor".

In this context, a precise definition of what a target group is, is essential. "Mature" political parties and governments would normally allow for the formation and operation of several NGOs, each defending the interests of specific groups. In a situation where you have the objectives of the ruling party being those of defending the interest of workers and peasant, this party would be expected to create the enabling political and economic atmosphere for developing independent mass based institutions of popular participation for the workers and peasants while allowing for other NGOs to operate. This second observation brings me, lastly, to a brief comment on what I called a "mature

party and government". This is, indeed, a very vague and difficult concept to define. At the risk of being too repetitive, I would define a mature party and government as institutions with the sufficient political capacity to allow for class diversity in the establishment of institutions of popular participation while at the same time ensuring that this diversity is not at the expense of the majority of the population.

In conclusion, therefore, contrary to the current emphasis by certain multilateral institutions, NGOs cannot be alternatives to efficient States and attempts at creating the correct enabling political and economic atmosphere for effective institutions of popular participation will depend on the presence of strong States and parties.

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